

Grandfather to Swim Across the Straits of Mackinac

Michigan Department of Corrections prison chaplain Ed Holsworth (56) started swimming again approximately 2 years ago to get in better physical condition. As a young man he was on the swim team at the Pontiac Central High School and a recipient of a lifesaving certificate through the Red Cross. After two back surgeries and a knee surgery he decided to go back into the pool along with daily workouts. Holsworth said "swimming is one of the best all around full body workouts one can get without pressure on the joints."



One year ago Ed saw an article in the Lansing State Journal about a 'mega distance' swimmer (Jim Dreyer) who was swimming across the Straits of Mackinac. It was then that the idea of training toward this goal was planted in his mind. Over the past year he has increased his distances in the pool to 4 miles (288 laps) in the Alma College swimming pool. Weekly workouts include two 1 ½ mile sprint swims (100 laps) in an hour. *Along with the benefits of the good exercise he has also began to be conscious of eating more healthy foods. Over the past two years he has lost almost 50 pounds and is down to the same weight he was in high school almost 40 years ago.*

In the middle of the training he received the news that a second grandson the youngest of four was born with severe/profound congenital inner ear nerve loss. This condition, similar to the hearing loss of his 8 year old brother, would not be able to be corrected by surgery. Both boys need to wear high-tech hearing aids to be able to hear and learn to speak. The hearing aids both boys need are purchased at a cost to their parents of approx. \$6,000 a pair and would cost the family \$12,000 for the two boys every 3 years. As most insurance companies in Michigan their medical insurance did not cover hearing aids, ear molds, visits to the audiologist, appointments to eye-ear-nose-and-throat specialists or extensive hearing tests at Central Michigan University. Ed's son and wife have had to borrow the money to cover the costs for the hearing aids and various other related costs; difficult financial times for them.

After seeking help from several children's foundations without success, Ed decided to do something himself for his two grandsons. He got the idea of swimming across the Mackinac Straits as a fundraiser to be put into a trust fund for his grandsons' hearing needs.



With that goal in mind, as part of his training, Ed swam 5 miles across the Grand Traverse Bay and 4 miles across Rainbow Lake. In his own form of Olympic event he has continued to train in preparation for the fundraising trip across the Mackinac Straits Labor Day weekend tentatively scheduled for August 29-31st weather permitting.